

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

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R 051120Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6118

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7485

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN

SUBJ: BHUTTO OFFER TO RESUME TALKS

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 6811 B. KARACHI 1612

SUMMARY: BHUTTO HAS REITERATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT INDIAN OFFER TO RESUME SIMLA NEGOTIATIONS. IN MOST COMPREHENSIVE JUSTIFICATION YET FOR MOVING FORWARD, HE BLENDED A VARIETY OF REASONS DESIGNED TO MAKE TALKS MORE POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE, INCLUDING ARGUMENT THAT GOP NEEDED TO FIND OUT WHAT INDIA WAS UP TO IN KASHMIR. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHAT ROLE GOP'S CONCERNS ABOUT INDIAN INTENTIONS WILL PLAY IN THE RESUMED DISCUSSIONS, PARTICULARLY ON PROGRESS TOWARD SETTLEMENT OF SUCH "EASY" ISSUES AS RESTORATION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND BORDER CROSSINGS. END SUMMARY

1. AT QUETTA PRESS CONFERENCE ON COMPLETION HIS BALUCHISTAN TRIP AUGUST 4, PRIME MIN BHUTTO REITERATED HIS WILLINGNESS
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TO ACCEPT INDIAN OFFER TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS. ALTHOUGH A GOOD

DEAL OF THE RATIONALE HE PUT FORTH FOR HOLDING TALKS HAD BEEN PRESENTED BY HIM EARLIER AT JULY 15 PARACHINAR PRESS CONFERENCE AND AUGUST 2 SPEECH AT QUETTA, HIS LATEST REMARKS REPRESENTED THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE JUSTIFICATION YET FOR MOVING FORWARD. A FURTHER EFFORT TO BRING PUBLIC OPINION WITH HIM AND MAKE TALKS POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE AT HOME, HIS COMMENTS BLENDED AN APPEAL TO NATIONAL HONOR, SELF-INTEREST, AND, REMARKABLY, ANTI-INDIAN SENTIMENT, WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT PAKISTAN WAS SUFFICIENTLY STRONG TO NEGOTIATE WITH A NUCLEAR INDIA.

2. BHUTTO GAVE FOUR REASONS FOR RESUMING TALKS. THESE WERE, IN ORDER, (A) GOP NEED TO TEST WHETHER SIMULTANEOUS "MASSING" OF TROOPS BY INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN WAS PART OF PLAN OR COINCIDENCE, (B) PAK WISH TO ABIDE BY TERMS SIMLA AGREEMENT, WHICH IN COUNTRY'S INTEREST, (C) PAK CONFIDENCE IN BILATERAL ASSURANCES IT HAS OBTAINED IN WAKE INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION, AND (D) NEED TO FIND OUT WHAT INDIA WAS UP TO IN KASHMIR.

3. IN MAKING FIRST THREE POINTS, BHUTTO GENERALLY REPEATED ARGUMENTS HE HAD MADE EARLIER. HIS WORDING ON BILATERAL ASSURANCES WAS NEW. IN DESCRIBING THESE ASSURANCES, WHICH HE CALLED MORE IMPORTANT THAN INTERNATIONAL ASSURANCES, HE USED TERM "NUCLEAR UMBRELLA". HE AGAIN PLEDGED THAT GOP WOULD CONTINUE TO MOBILIZE WORLD OPINION AGAINST NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION.

4. BHUTTO'S DISCUSSION OF ADVANTAGE TO BE GAINED IN LEARNING WHAT INDIAN INTENTIONS WERE IN KASHMIR INCLUDED LENGTHY PASSAGE IN WHICH HE SPOKE ABOUT "SINISTER INTERNATIONAL CONSPIRACY" AND PRESENTED "INTRIGUING" AND "REVEALING" SCHEDULE OF EVENTS BEGINNING WITH MAY 18 INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION, RUNNING THROUGH AHMADIYA VIOLENCE AND WALI KHAN'S ACTIVITY, AND TYING IN EARLY JULY MEETING OF THE KASHMIR PLEBESCITE FRONT. HE DECLARED THAT SHEIKH ABDULLAH AND PLEBESCITE FRONT LIEUTENANT MIRAZA AFZAL BEG WOULD NOT HAVE DARED CHANGE THEIR POSITION ON PLEBESCITE FOR JAMMU AND KASHMIR HAD THEY NOT THOUGHT PAKISTAN WAS FULLY ENGROSSED AND INVOLVED IN ITS OWN AFFAIRS AS RESULT OF DIFFICULTIES PARTLY THE CREATION OF OUTSIDERS. HE ALSO WARNED THAT NEITHER GOI NOR ABDULLAH HAVE AUTHORITY "SEPARATELY OR JOINTLY" TO MAKE ANY DECISION ON CHANGING THE STATUS OF JAMMU

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AND KASHMIR, AND THAT WHAT THEY DO THERE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO GOP IF IT DIFFERS FROM PAK POSITION. ASKED BY QUESTIONER IF GOP WOULD TAKE KASHNER ISSUE TO UN SHOULD INDIA MAINTAIN ADAMANT POSITION, BHUTTO REPLIED THAT OBLIGATIONS OF SIMLA AGREEMENT AND POSSIBILITY OF VETO MADE THAT COURSE INADVISABLE.

5. ALTHOUGH WE KNOW THAT THE GOP IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT

THE WORKING UP OF NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE GOI AND THE PLEBESCITE FRONT IN KASHMIR, WE CANNOT NOW JUDGE WHAT ROLE THESE CONCERNS AND OTHER PAK SUSPICIONS ABOUT INDIAN INTENTIONS WILL PLAY IN THE RESUMED DISCUSSIONS, AND, PARTICULARLY, WHETHER THEY WILL INHIBIT PROGRESS ON OTHER ISSUES. NEW POL COUNSELOR WAS TOLD AUGUST 2 BY MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR SOUTH ASIA ABDUL SATTAR THAT PAKS COULD EASILY DUST OFF PROPOSALS ON COMMUNICATIONS AND BORDER CROSSINGS THEY HAD WORKED UP FOR ABORTED JUNE 10 TALKS. HE SAID HE EXPECTED AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED ON THESE MATTERS WITHOUT DIFFICULTY AND DID NOT TIE THEIR SETTLEMENT TO WILLINGNESS ON GOI'S PART TO EASE GOP'S CONCERNS ABOUT ITS MOVES IN KASHMIR AND ELSEWHERE. WITH NO TIME YET SET FOR THE RESUMED TALKS, IT IS PROBABLY TOO EARLY TO TELL IF THIS WILL BE THE CASE.

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